



Volume 3, Issue 12

# Ouranophantor

December 2020

*A Newsletter of St. Basil Greek Orthodox Church*



# St. Basil Greek Orthodox Church

733 S. Ashland Avenue, Chicago, IL 60607

[www.stbasilchicago.org](http://www.stbasilchicago.org)



Church Office: [info@stbasilchicago.org](mailto:info@stbasilchicago.org)

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Parish Council President:

Jayme Schenk

## Worship Hours

**Sundays:** Orthros 8:15 a.m. followed by Divine Liturgy

**Weekdays:** Divine Liturgy 6:30 a.m.

**Esperinos:** For Major Feasts 6:00 p.m.

**Wednesday:** Paraklesis Service 6:00 p.m.

## Upcoming Events/Liturgies

### December 13, 2020

- + Drop off Angel Tree gifts at church

### December 19, 2020

- + Distribute gifts to Angel Tree families

### December 24, 2020

- + Royal Hours of Christmas: 8:30 a.m.
- + Christmas Eve Vespers 4:00 p.m.

### December 25, 2020

- + Christmas Day: Orthros 8:30 a.m. and Divine Liturgy 9:45 a.m.

### December 31, 2020

- + Our Festal and Patronal Vespers 7:00 p.m.

### January, 1 2020

- + St. Basil the Great Feast Day: Orthros 8:30 a.m. and Divine Liturgy 9:45 a.m.

## We welcome new families to our parish.

Now is the time to reach out to your loved ones who have fallen away for whatever reason and bring them back to church. Now is the time to share your faith with others. Together we must grow. Together we must build the Body of Christ. Invite someone to a service or to a church event. We have one of the friendliest communities in the Archdiocese.

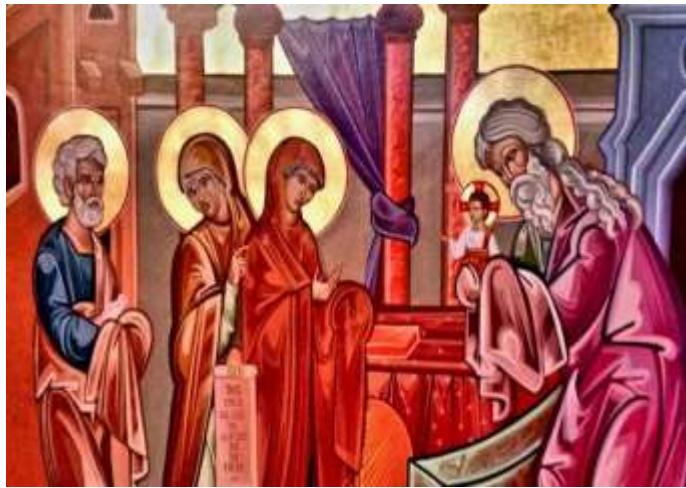
Let us go out so that they will know we are Christians by our love.

## Follow on Facebook

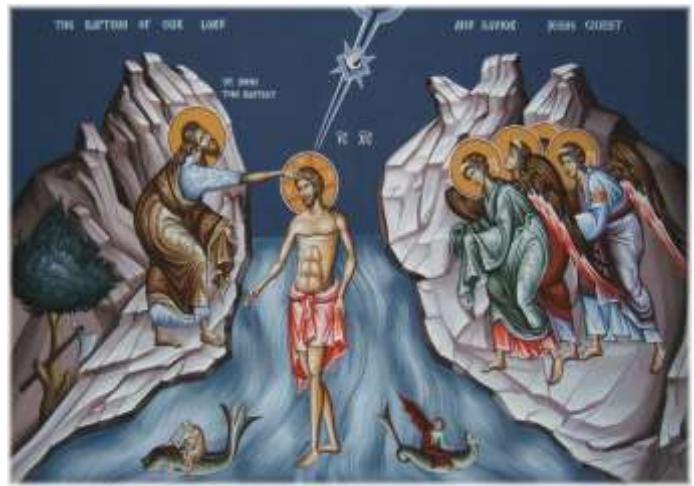
<https://www.facebook.com/St-Basil-Greek-Orthodox-Church-476775679041438/>

# Sacraments and Blessings

## 40-Day Blessings:



## Baptisms:



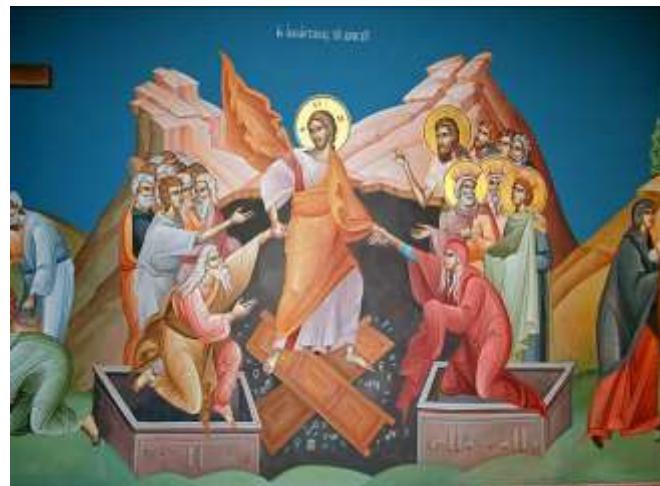
## Chrismations:



## Weddings:



## Funerals:



## Father Dimitri's Message



My Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As we gather together for the holidays, as best we can given the circumstances, we know the reason for the season. It is not something new. It is not something that needs to be stated every year as though we somehow forgot. Yet, we choose to ignore it. We choose to focus on ourselves and our personal desires and expectations of the events.

As a result, we see depression, sadness, and expectations that never seem to match up with reality. We decorate our homes and fill our time with parties, but none of these things ever fills the void. Especially now, when we are missing gatherings, and one another, the void only seems to grow larger.

I use the term “things” purposefully because we are not going to find joy in any “thing.” We won’t find joy in any “idea” either. The only real and lasting joy is to be found in the person of Jesus Christ. He is the Way, the Truth and the Life (John 14:6). He is the answer to every question, and every hole in our life is filled by the Holy Spirit. To truly understand this season, we must acquire the Holy Spirit.

If we were filled with the Holy Spirit, we would weep with such unspeakable joy at the Incarnation of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We would not think of ourselves, but would be like the shepherds seeking to tell everyone the Good News. We would not worry about presents for ourselves, but would be seeking to offer to God gold (kingly praise), frankincense (Godly worship), and myrrh (useful works). If we were filled with the Holy Spirit, instead of making dynamic plans, we would always say, “I make plans, but in the end, ‘Thy will be done.’”

How else can we explain that churches are empty on Christmas? This year, people will say Covid-19 is responsible, but how else can we explain the destruction of Christmas year after year? How else can we explain that children do not know the story of the Birth of Jesus Christ? We have long been presented with the truth and we know what is right. Yet, we simply cannot seem to realign ourselves.

That is because we cannot change by willpower alone. We cannot seek to only be superficially “good people.” We can only change with the Grace of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, I would like to share an excerpt from St. Seraphim of Sarov, *On the Acquisition of the Holy Spirit*. In this work, which I urge all Christians to read and internalize, he shows us the acquisition of the Holy Spirit is the most important spiritual goal for us all. It is the beginning, the middle, and the end of our spiritual journey, and it is the source of every fruit of the Holy Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control (Galatians 5:22-23).

“Acquire the grace of the Holy Spirit also by practicing all the other virtues for Christ’s sake. Trade spiritually with them; trade with those which give you the greatest profit. Accumulate capital from the superabundance of God’s grace, deposit it in God’s eternal bank which will bring you immaterial interest, not four or six percent, but one hundred percent for one spiritual ruble, and even infinitely more than that. For example, if prayer and watching gives you more of God’s grace, watch and pray; if fasting gives you much of the spirit of God, fast; if almsgiving gives you more, give alms. Weigh every virtue done for Christ’s sake in this manner.

“That’s it, my son. That is how you must spiritually trade in virtue. Distribute the Holy Spirit’s gifts of grace to those in need of them, just as a lighted candle burning with earthly fire shines itself and lights other candles for the illumining of all in other places, without diminishing its own light. If it is so, with regard to the earthly fire, what shall we say about the fire of the grace of the All-Holy Spirit of God? For earthly riches decrease with distribution, but the more the heavenly riches of God’s grace are distributed, the more they increase in the one who distributes them. Thus the Lord Himself was pleased to say to the Samaritan woman: All who drink this water will be thirsty again. “But whoever drinks the water that I shall give him will never be thirsty any more; but the water that I shall give him will be in him a spring of water leaping up to eternal life” (John 4:13-14).”

This turns the logic of the world on its head. Instead of gaining and hoarding to acquire treasure, we ought to give. The recompense of this is always infinitely higher than we give. That is how the Infinite Grace of God pours out over us. The treasure of the Holy Spirit, in addition to providing riches that can never be taken away, also makes us into people so full of light and fire, that we enrich those around us. We become beacons and we inspire others to seek that light themselves. In this period of sadness, the world needs such people.

If we can change with His help, then the reason for the season becomes self-evident. I pray that we can all acquire such a spirit. I pray we can all give so much more than Christmas gifts to our loved ones this season. I pray we can gain, instead of an iPad or laptop, kindness or gentleness.

I wish you all, my spiritual family in Christ, a very Merry Christmas (Christ’s Mass, a.k.a The Divine Liturgy of the Incarnation our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ) and a Happy New Year. The greatest gift I have been given is the honor and privilege to be your priest.

I remain your servant in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, featuring a stylized cross (+) followed by the name "Fr. Dimitri" and "Tobias" on a separate line, with a decorative flourish at the end.

Fr. Dimitri Tobias, Proistamenos

## Parish Council Update

By Themistocles Frangos

Dear St. Basil Parishioners,

The holidays are quickly approaching and we pray that everyone is staying safe and healthy. The new city and state COVID-19 restrictions have not affected in-person attendance at St. Basil and we will keep everyone informed of any new changes. We continue to stream the liturgies live on Facebook and YouTube for those who have been unable to attend church in person.

November was Stewardship month at St. Basil. Thank you to everyone who gives their time, talent, and treasure to make St. Basil home and allows the church to carry out its good works, especially during the pandemic, when many of the ministries stepped up to provide community members with basic hygiene supplies, students with school supplies, and over 1,700 homemade masks. On November 8, Leia and Corey Kennelly gave a testimonial on what St. Basil means to them. If you haven't listened, please take the opportunity to check out the video, which is posted online and the church's website.

Parish Council elections will be conducted through the mail this year due to the pandemic. The church mailed out ballots to each Steward in good standing in 2020. Please complete and return the ballot to the church office by Sunday, December 13th. Ballots can be mailed back or dropped off in person.

Finally, as we turn the calendar to the new year, the church will be celebrating its feast day on January 1, 2021, with vespers the night before on December 31. See page 14 for more information on the schedule of both services. From everyone at St. Basil, have a blessed Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year 2021!

Themistocles Frangos  
Parish Council Secretary



## Stewardship Update



The Stewardship Ministry lovingly reminds all stewards that it is not too late to pledge for 2020. You can sign up at <http://www.stbasilchicago.org/our-parish/stewardship/> or pick up a pamphlet at the pangari.

### 2020 Snapshot (As of November 27, 2020)

Stewards	Pledged	Collected
156	\$209,653	\$194,529

Registration for 2021 has begun. Stewardship packets will be sent out in the mail early in December. If you do not receive your packet, please reach out to the church office. We are looking forward to an exciting and prosperous 2021.

**Have you become a steward of St. Basil's?** Visit our website at [www.stbasilchicago.org](http://www.stbasilchicago.org) and click on "Stewardship" to learn more, or contact the church office at 312-243-3738 for additional information.

***For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (Matt. 6:21)***

# Philoptochos Update

By Nichole Kourvas Drimonas

Greetings!

Even though we cannot all be together this holiday season, we can still spread holiday cheer! Philoptochos is currently sponsoring a Book/Toy Drive for a kindergarten class at Robert Nathaniel Dett Elementary School. Please donate items to brighten up the children's holidays. (See details on following page.)

Philoptochos has also commissioned beautiful-three dimensional ornaments in the shape of St. Basil Church. Ornaments can be purchased on our website for \$25. Please consider purchasing one and bringing St. Basil home with you today. (See details on page 9.)

Lastly, the best way we can all support each other is to pray for one another. Please see the following Prayer for Pandemics and keep all of our fellow St. Basil brothers and sisters in your daily prayers.



## Prayer for Protection against a Pandemic

Lord Jesus Christ our God, You Who created human beings with utter goodness, the healer of our souls and bodies, heed now the supplication of Your children, and save us from the impeding threat against the world. For this affliction has spread ferociously and the fear of death has surrounded us. Many have suffered and many have passed on to repose, and there is none to save us, except You, O Lord.

We know, Merciful Lord, that all this will cultivate our faith, as we implore you, crying out in utter repentance. Undo, O Lord, the dangerous effects of the virus and heal all people, as a most Gracious Lord. For those, who repose in peace, give rest in Your heavenly abode. Grant peace to the world, so that all people know that You are the Only God, and your faithful are not bound by death, but live forever.

For You are our hope and our whole life is in Your benevolent hands, and to You we give glory, as well as to the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

#**Philostrong**

I wish you all a blessed and healthy holiday season!  
Happy Holidays. Merry Christmas.

Nichole Kourvas Drimonas  
President, St. Basil Philoptochos

## **St. Basil Ladies Philoptochos Society**

Is sponsoring a Book/Toy Drive  
For our parish's **Operation Classroom** recipient

### **The Kindergarten Class at Robert Nathaniel Dett Elementary School**



**No need to go out, or figure out how to get it to church!**

**Please go to our registry on Amazon Smile and purchase something for the students. Just use the link below to get started!**

#### **Dett School Kindergarten Gift List**

<https://smile.amazon.com/registries/custom/29OQ7PJ4QOGAT/guest-view>

**The items will be delivered right to the church and we get the gifts to the students in time for the holidays.**

# **Bring St. Basil Home this Christmas Ornaments Are Available Now**

At this time, when we are all missing our beloved St. Basil Church, we have an opportunity to bring the church into our homes this Christmas. Our parish's Philoptochos Society has arranged to have beautiful three-dimensional brass Christmas ornaments custom-made in the shape of the church. The ornaments are boxed, with a ribbon for hanging, and sell for \$25, plus \$2.50 if you want to have them shipped. You can avoid the shipping fee if you pick them up at the church. Ornaments will be sold at church after Saturday and Sunday liturgies. You can also order by phone from the church office or online on the St. Basil website.

**ORDER YOURS TODAY ON OUR WEBSITE**  
**www.stbasilchicago.org**



## Sunday School

By Jennifer Georgopoulos

The St. Basil Sunday School team is excited to present the 2020 St. Basil Virtual Christmas Pageant. Every family and/or student is asked to record themselves (audio or video) reading or singing a section of the pageant, which will be edited together to create a final presentation in time for Christmas. To participate, families need to refer to the email, choose a part, then record.

Families are asked to upload their recordings or email them by Saturday, December 12. It's so easy and can easily be done by your phone. Also, Please check out the St. Basil Bitmoji classroom, which has been updated . In addition to our weekly Sunday School lessons, our Bitmoji Classroom (slide 2) now has an Advent Calendar in the form of a Jesse Tree. A new "ornament" will pop up on the tree each day of Advent (November 15 - Christmas) with a link to an Old Testament scripture reading to help prepare us for Christmas.

Sunday School is offering both in person and online sessions. To receive instruction, students need to be registered for the St. Basil Sunday School program. Sunday School students, grades K-4th can access their Sunday School lessons in the Bitmoji virtual classroom on the St. Basil website. Students in 5th-7th may also access lessons in the Bitmoji through Zoom meets. The older grades meet virtually via Zoom and class has been a great success. A special thanks to our teachers for their hard work and dedication. The Bitmoji classrooms, Zoom meets and lessons are outstanding. Great job to The St. Basil Sunday School Team!

If you have any questions please reach out to Jennifer Georgopoulos at [jenspalla75@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jenspalla75@sbcglobal.net)



# St. John the Almsgiver Ministry

By Marina Arvanitis

In recent weeks, we have again started seeing more neighbors in need coming to our parish doors for help. We currently have double-fleece blankets and sweatsuits to provide, but we will need to build up more supplies for the coming months, including Almsgiver packs (see contents below) and men's coats. The St. John the Almsgiver Ministry is currently collecting monetary donations, Jewel gift cards (\$10 each), and men's winter coats (large or extra large). If you are able to assist, please contact Vicky Crosby in the church office. We are very grateful for any and all donations!

## Winter Almsgiver Pack Contents:

Prayer card and list of local shelters and other resources

Jewel gift card - \$10

Cloth mask

Long underwear

Winter item (hat or gloves or scarf)

Socks

Toothbrush

Travel-sized toothpaste

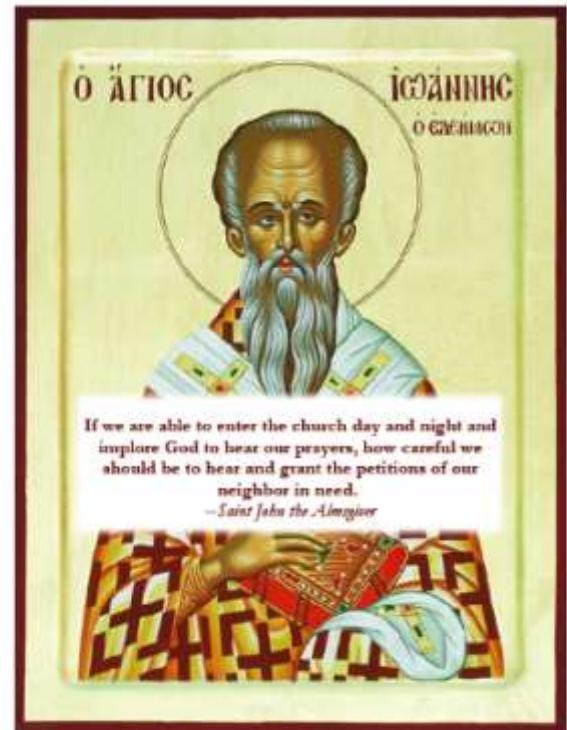
Comb

Band-Aids

Hand wipes (Wet Ones pocket-size singles)

Granola bars

Bottle of water



## St. Basil Prison Ministry

By Pat Cole

### Parishioners Show the Spirit of Christmas

A heartfelt thank-you to parishioners who purchased gifts for Angel Tree children this year. Thanks to your generosity we were able to serve all of the 59 children we were assigned. Please drop off gifts at the church by December 13 so that families can pick them up on December 19.

This year, more than ever, we want to be able to give caregivers a food gift card for their holiday meal. We were blessed to receive a generous anonymous donation that will help us get those cards. If you can find it in your heart to make a small donation to the Prison Ministry, it will help us fill those requests. We are also receiving many requests for books from prisoners who are on lockdown due to the coronavirus. In 2020 we purchased 20 books totaling about \$300.



**To make a donation, please contact Pat Cole at 773-252-8254  
([patriciastahl@comcast.net](mailto:patriciastahl@comcast.net)) or Steve Cole at 312-493-4063 ([stephancole@comcast.net](mailto:stephancole@comcast.net)).**

## St. Tryphon Garden Ministry

By Marina Arvanitis



This summer and fall, our ministry continued tending the parish gardens and using organic methods to amend the garden soil. Thanks to this work over the last several years, our garden soil is no longer full of city garbage and instead is becoming dark, alive, and full of earthworms — a sign of hope and life in these troubling times! This November, our ministry volunteers transplanted many perennial plants, removed old tulip and daffodil bulbs that were no longer blooming, and planted a new crop of over 700 bulbs along Ashland Avenue and Polk Street. God willing, these will provide a beautiful display for our parishioners and passersby in time for Pascha. Until then, if you would like to help purchase outdoor Christmas decorations, such as wreaths, please contact Vicky Crosby in the church office for assistance donating to the ministry.



Do you work in the city of Chicago?

Would you like to attend Weekday Liturgies but cannot because of Work? Join us at St. Basil.

#### December

2: St. Porphyrios of Kafsokalivia

4: Ss. Barbara the Great Martyr & St. John of Damascus

9: Conception of the Theotokos

Patronal Feasts for the Chicago parishes will not be celebrated at St. Basil

Please check the [St. Basil website calendar](#) for updates to above schedule. Liturgies are Livestreamed on the [St. Basil Facebook Page](#)

## ONLINE BIBLE STUDY

The logo features a circular icon of St. Basil the Great on the left, the text "St. Basil Greek Orthodox Church of Chicago, Illinois" in the center, and an icon of the Holy Bible on the right.

**When:** Tuesday Mornings – 10:00 am – 11:00 am

**Where:** ONLINE VIA

Bible Study Covid-19 Fall: Acts of the Apostles

Participate in a Zoom Meeting Watch on Facebook Live and ask questions in the comments

The logo features a colorful, ornate border with a central illustration of a saintly figure in a cave, surrounded by trees and a city in the background.

ST. BASIL GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

ONLINE ADULT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

**THE LADDER OF DIVINE ASCENT**

ACQUIRE THE HEAVENLY VIRTUES AND LOVE GOD MORE FULLY

November 11 - April 14

Join us online each week

Wednesday Evenings 6:30-7:30 p.m.

Zoom Classroom

<https://zoom.us/j/97901297537>

Meeting ID: 979 0129 7537

Read the Text Online by [Clicking this Link](#)

## Christmas Liturgical Schedule



### Thursday, December 24

#### *Royal Hours of Christmas*

Hours 8:30 a.m.

#### *Christmas Eve*

Vesperal Liturgy 4:00 p.m.

### Friday, December 25

#### *Christmas Day*

Orthros 8:30 a.m.

Divine Liturgy 9:45 a.m.

*Christ is born! Glorify Him!*

### Thursday, December 31

#### *Our Festal and Patronal Vespers*

Hierarchal Great Vespers 7:00 p.m.

Philoptochos Vasilopita celebration to follow

### Friday, January 1

*Feast of the Circumcision of Our Lord and Savior and St. Basil the Great, Archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia, the Heaven Revealer*

Orthros 8:00 a.m.

Hierarchal Divine Liturgy 9:45 a.m.

### Tuesday, January 5

#### *Royal Hours of Theophany*

Hours 8:30 a.m.

#### *Eve of Theophany with Blessing of Waters*

Vesperal Divine Liturgy 8:30 a.m.

### Wednesday, January 6

#### *Theophany with Blessing of Waters*

Orthros 8:30 a.m.

Divine Liturgy 9:45 a.m.

# **DONATIONS FOR HOLIDAYS & FEAST DAY SEASON 2020**

## **Holidays:**

Bottles or Cases of Nama Wine

Incense for Christmas and Feast Day - \$250

Poinsettias - \$15 (30 needed)

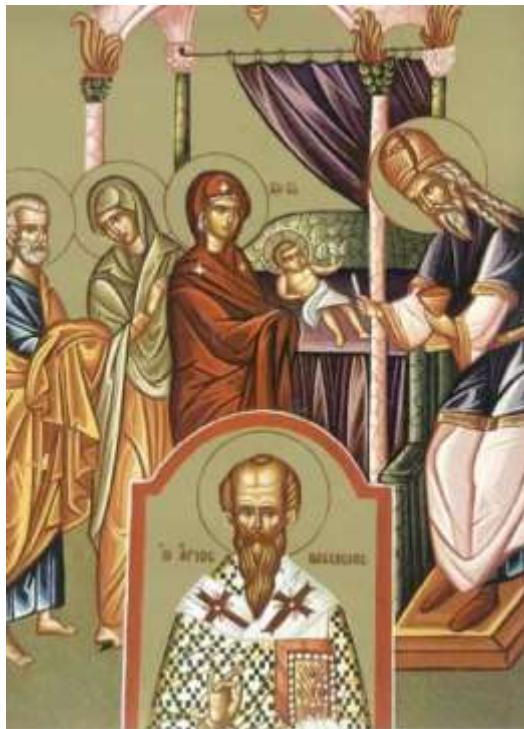
Flowers for Icon of Christmas - \$150



## **Liturgical:**

Beeswax Candles for Priestly Procession - \$75

Bishop's Candles - \$50



## **Feast Day:**

Flowers for Icons of St. Basil - \$150 (2 needed)

Flowers for Processional Icon - \$150

Flowers for Reliquary of St. Basil - \$150

*Note: Please specify exact item with your donation. THANK YOU for your love & support! Βοήθειά σας!*

**Please complete the information below and return entire form to the St. Basil Church office along with your payment.**

**Kindly make checks payable to St. Basil Greek Orthodox Church.**

(Please print)

Item \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Donation Amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Check \_\_\_\_\_ Cash \_\_\_\_\_ Credit Card \_\_\_\_\_

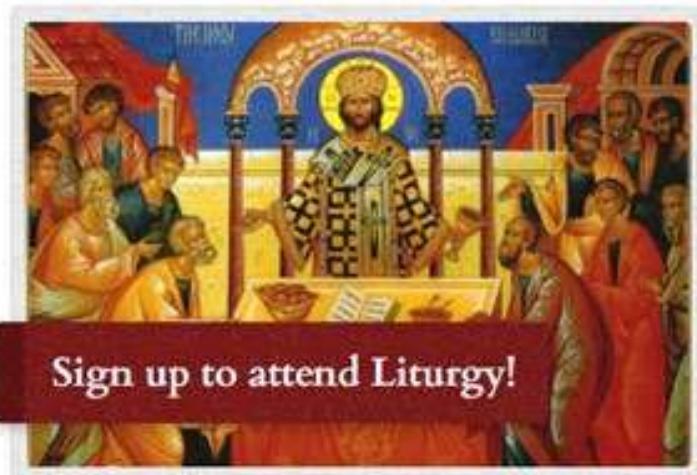
Credit Card: Visa \_\_\_\_\_ MasterCard \_\_\_\_\_ American Express \_\_\_\_\_

Card Number \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature (for Credit Card) \_\_\_\_\_

## Sign-Up Genius

St. Basil Greek Orthodox Church is using  
SIGN-UP GENIUS



Please use the link below:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20f0a44abad28a6f85-divine>

To Sign Up to attend Divine Services

**Reserve Your Spot Today!**

If a family member is unable to use Sign-Up Genius, please call the church office and Vicky will help sign that individual up.

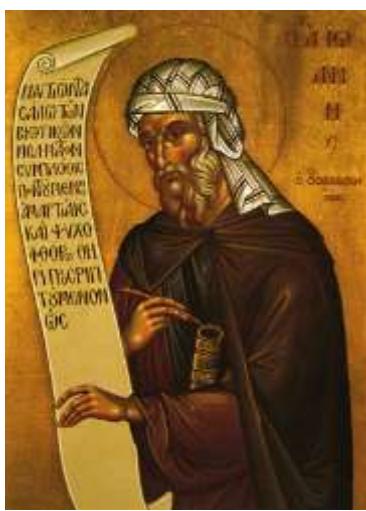
## December 4—St. Barbara & St. John of Damascus



Saint Barbara was from Heliopolis of Phoenicia and lived during the reign of Maximian. She was the daughter of a certain idolater named Dioscorus. When Barbara came of age, she was enlightened in her pure heart and secretly believed in the Holy Trinity. About this time Dioscorus began building a bath-house; before it was finished he was required to go away to attend to certain matters, and in his absence Barbara directed the workmen to build a third window in addition to the two her Father had commanded. She also inscribed the sign of the Cross with her finger upon the marble of the bath-house, leaving the saving sign cut as deeply into the marble as if it had been done with an iron too. (When the Synaxarion of Saint Barbara was written, the marble of the bath-house and the cross inscribed by Saint Barbara were still preserved, and many healings were worked there.) When Dioscorus returned, he asked why the third window had been added; Barbara began to declare to him the mystery of the Trinity. Because she refused to renounce her faith, Dioscorus tortured Barbara inhumanely, and after subjecting her to many sufferings he beheaded her with his own hands, in the year 290.

### Apolytikion in the Fourth Tone

Let us honor the holy Barbara for, with the aid of the Cross as her weapon, she crushed the snares of the enemy, and was rescued from them like a bird.



Saint John was born in Damascus about the year 675, the son of wealthy and pious parents, of the family of Mansur. He was reared together with Saint Cosmas (see Oct. 14), who had been adopted by John's father Sergius, a man of high rank in the service of the Caliph of Damascus. Both of these young men were instructed by a certain monk, also named Cosmas, who had been taken captive in Italy by the Arabs and later ransomed by John's Father. Saint John became a great philosopher and enlightener of the age in which he lived, and was honoured by the Caliph with the dignity of counsellor.

When Emperor Leo the Isaurian (reigned 717-741) began his war on the holy icons, John wrote epistles defending their veneration. Since the Saint, being under the Caliph of Damascus, was beyond Leo's power, the Iconoclast Emperor had a letter forged in John's handwriting which invited Leo to attack Damascus, saying the city guard was then weak; Leo then sent this letter to the Caliph, who in his fury punished John's supposed treason with the severing of his right hand. The Saint obtained the Caliph's Permission to have his severed hand again, and that night prayed fervently to the most holy Theotokos before her icon. She appeared to him in a dream and healed his hand, which, when he awoke, he found to be healed in truth. This Miracle convinced the Caliph of his innocence, and he restored John to his office as counsellor. The Saint, however, with many pleadings obtained his permission to withdraw from the world to become a monk. He assumed the monastic habit in the Monastery of Saint Sabbas. Then he had as elder a very simple and austere monk who commanded him neither to write to anyone, nor to speak of the worldly knowledge he had acquired, and John faithfully obeyed. A monk grieving over his brother's death, however, after insisting vehemently, prevailed upon John to write a funeral hymn to console him for his brother's death. When John's

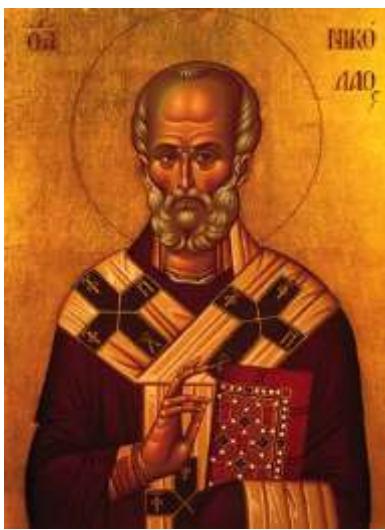
elder learned of his transgression of the rule he had given him, he cast him out of his cell, and would only accept him back after John had humbly, with much self-condemnation and without murmuring consented to clean all the latrines in the lavra. After his elder had received him back, our Lady appeared to the elder and sternly charged him not to hinder John any longer from his writings and composition of hymns.

In his writings he fought courageously against the Iconoclasts Leo the Isaurian and his son Constantine Copronymus. He was also the first to write a refutation of Islam. The time he had spent as a counsellor in the courts of the Moslems of Damascus had given him opportunity to learn their teachings at first hand, and he wrote against their errors with a sound understanding of their essence. Saint John was surnamed Chrysorroas ("Golden-stream") because of the eloquence of his rhetorical style and the great abundance of his writings; this name - Chrysorroas was also the name of the river that flows by Damascus. In his writings he set forth the Orthodox Faith with exactness and order. In his old age, after his foster-brother Cosmas had been made Bishop of Maiuma, John also was ordained presbyter by the Patriarch of Jerusalem. Having lived eighty-four years, he reposed in peace in 760. In addition to his theological writings, he adorned the Church of Christ with metrical and prose hymns and composed many of the prosomia used as the models for the melodies of the Church's liturgical chant; he also composed many of the sacred hymns for the feasts of the Lord Saviour and the Theotokos. The life of Saint John of Damascus was written by John, Patriarch of Jerusalem. See also June 28.

### Apolytikion in the Plagal of the Fourth Tone

You are a guide of Orthodoxy, a teacher of piety and modesty, a luminary of the world, the God inspired pride of monastics. O wise John, you have enlightened everyone by your teachings. You are the harp of the Spirit. Intercede to Christ our God for the salvation of our souls.

## December 6—St. Nicholas



This Saint lived during the reign of Saint Constantine the Great, and reposed in 330. As a young man, he desired to espouse the solitary life. He made a pilgrimage to the holy city Jerusalem, where he found a place to withdraw to devote himself to prayer. It was made known to him, however, that this was not the will of God for him, but that he should return to his homeland to be a cause of salvation for many. He returned to Myra, and was ordained bishop. He became known for his abundant mercy, providing for the poor and needy, and delivering those who had been unjustly accused. No less was he known for his zeal for the truth. He was present at the First Ecumenical Council of the 318 Fathers at Nicaea in 325; upon hearing the blasphemies that Arius brazenly uttered against the Son of God, Saint Nicholas struck him on the face. Since the canons of the Church forbid the clergy to strike any man at all, his fellow bishops were in perplexity what disciplinary action was to be taken against this hierarch whom all revered. In the night our Lord Jesus Christ and our Lady Theotokos appeared to certain of the bishops, informing them that no action was to be taken against him, since he had acted not out of passion, but extreme love and piety. The Dismissal Hymn for holy hierarchs, The truth of things hath revealed thee to thy flock ... was written originally for Saint Nicholas. He is the patron of all travellers, and of sea-farers in particular; he is one of the best known and best loved Saints of all time.

### Apolytikion in the Fourth Tone

A model of faith and the image of gentleness, the example of your life has shown you forth to your sheep-fold to be a master of temperance. You obtained thus through being lowly, gifts from on high, and riches through poverty. Nicholas, our father and priest of priests, intercede with Christ our God that He may save our souls.

## December 8 and 9—Conception of the Theotokos

According to the ancient tradition of the Church, since Saint Anna, the Ancestor of God, was barren, she and her husband Joachim remained without children until old age. Therefore, sorrowing over their childlessness, they besought God with a promise that, if He were to grant them the fruit of the womb, they would offer their offspring to Him as a gift. And God, hearkening to their supplication, informed them through an Angel concerning the birth of the Virgin. And thus, through God's promise, Anna conceived according to the laws of nature, and was deemed worthy to become the mother of the Mother of our Lord (see also Sept. 8).

### Apolytikion in the Fourth Tone

Against all hope, the bonds of barrenness are loosed today. For, God has hearkened unto Joachim and Anna clearly promising that they would bear a godly maiden. He who commanded the angel to cry out to her, "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you," will be born of her, the infinite One Himself, becoming man.



## December 12—St. Spyridon

Spyridon, the God-bearing Father of the Church, the great defender of Corfu and the boast of all the Orthodox, had Cyprus as his homeland. He was simple in manner and humble of heart, and was a shepherd of sheep. When he was joined to a wife, he begat of her a daughter whom they named Irene. After his wife's



departure from this life, he was appointed Bishop of Trimythus, and thus he became also a shepherd of rational sheep. When the First Ecumenical Council was assembled in Nicaea, he also was present, and by means of his most simple words stopped the mouths of the Arians who were wise in their own conceit. By the divine grace which dwelt in him, he wrought such great wonders that he received the surname 'Wonderworker.' So it is that, having tended his flock piously and in a manner pleasing to God, he reposed in the Lord about the year 350, leaving to his country his sacred relics as a consolation and source of healing for the faithful.

About the middle of the seventh century, because of the incursions made by the barbarians at that time, his sacred relics were taken to Constantinople, where they remained, being honoured by the emperors themselves. But before the fall of Constantinople, which took place on May 29, 1453, a certain priest named George Kalokhairetes, the parish priest of the church where the Saint's sacred relics, as well as those of Saint Theodora the Empress, were kept took them away on account of the impending peril. Travelling by way of Serbia, he came as far as Arta in Epirus, a region in Western Greece opposite to the isle of Corfu. From there, while the misfortunes of the Christian people were increasing with every day, he passed over to Corfu about the year 1460. The relics of Saint Theodora were given to the people of Corfu; but those of Saint Spyridon remain to this day, according to the rights of inheritance, the most precious treasure of the priest's own descendants, and they continue to be a staff for the faithful in Orthodoxy, and a supernatural wonder for those that behold him; for even after the passage of 1,500 years, they have remained incorrupt, and even the flexibility of his flesh has been preserved. Truly wondrous is God in His Saints!

(Ps. 67:3 5)

### Apolytikion in the First Tone

O Father, God-bearer, Spyridon, you were proven a champion and Wonder Worker of the First Ecumenical Council. You spoke to the girl in the grave and turned the serpent to gold. And, when chanting your prayers, most sacred One, angels ministered with you. Glory to Him who glorified you; glory to Him who crowned you; glory to Him who, through you, works healing for all.

### December 17—Prophet Daniel & St. Dyonios of Zakynthos

The Prophet Daniel and the Three Children were all descended from the royal tribe of Judah. In the year 599 before Christ, in the reign of Joachim, who was also called Jechonias (I Chron. 3:16, and II Chron. 36:8), while yet children, these righteous ones were led away as captives into Babylon together with the other Jews by Nabuchodonosor. He singled them out from among the other captives to serve him, and renamed them thus: Daniel was named Baltazar; Ananias, Sedrach: Misail, Misach; and Azarias, Abednago. They were reared in the royal court, and taught the wisdom of the Chaldeans; and after the passage of three years, they surpassed all the Chaldean sages (Dan. 1).

Thereafter, Daniel, being still a lad, interpreted that mysterious image seen by Nabuchodonosor in a dream, an image that was composed of different metals, but was shattered and ground to dust by a certain stone which had been hewn out of a mountain without the hand of man. This vision

clearly portrayed through the mountain the height of the Virgin's holiness and the power of the Holy Spirit which overshadowed her. Through the image of the Stone, Christ was portrayed, Who was seedlessly born of her, and Who by His coming as the Godman would shatter and destroy all the kingdoms of the world, which were portrayed through the image; and He would raise them that believe in Him into His Heavenly Kingdom, which is eternal and everlasting (ibid. 2:31-45). Thereupon, he signified in prophecy the time of His appearance in the Jordan, the beginning of His preaching of the Gospel, the time of His saving Passion, and the cessation of the worship according to the Mosaic Law, (ibid. 9:14-27).

He portrayed most excellently the majestic and dread image of His second coming, presenting by means of words, as with living colours, the fiery throne which shall be set, the Eternal Judge Who shall sit thereon, the river of fire that shall flow forth before Him, the calling to account before the impartial judgment seat, the opened books of each ones deeds, the thousands upon thousands of them that minister to Him, and the ten thousands of them that stand in His presence (ibid. 7: 9-10). Daniel (whose name means "God is judge") was called "man of desires" by the Angels that appeared (ibid. 9:23), because he courageously disdained every desire of the body, even the very bread that is necessary for nourishment. Furthermore, he received this name because, in his longing for the freedom of those of his tribe, and his desire to know their future condition, he ceased not supplicating God, fasting and bending the knee three times a day. Because of this prayer he was cast into the den of lions, after he had been accused by his enemies as a transgressor of the decree issued through the proclamation of the king, that no one should worship or ask for anything from God or from men for thirty days, but only from the king. But having stopped the mouths of the lions by divine might, and appearing among them as though he were a shepherd of sheep, Daniel showed the impious the might of godliness (ibid. 6:1-23).

As for the Three Children, Ananias ("Yah is gracious"), Misail ("Who is what God is?"), and Azarias ("Yah is keeper"), since they refused to offer adoration to Nabuchodonosor's image, they were cast into the furnace of fire. They were preserved unharmed amidst the flames - even their hair was untouched - by the descent of the Angel of the Lord, that is, the Son of God. Walking about in the furnace, as though in the midst of dew, they sang the universal hymn of praise to God, which is found in the Seventh and Eighth Odes of the Holy Psalter. And coming forth therefrom, without even the smell of the fire on their clothes (Dan. 3), they prefigured in themselves the Virgin's incorrupt giving of birth; for she, on receiving the Fire of the Godhead within her womb, was not burned, but remained virgin, even as she was before giving birth. Therefore the Church celebrates the Three Children and Daniel on this day, on the Sunday of the Forefathers, and on the Sunday before the Nativity of Christ, since they prefigured and proclaimed His Incarnation. Furthermore, they were of the tribe of Judah, wherefrom, Christ sprang forth according to the flesh. The holy Three Children completed their lives full of days; as for the Prophet Daniel, he lived until the reign of Cyrus, King of Persia, whom he also petitioned that his nation be allowed to return to Jerusalem and that the Temple be raised up again, and his request was granted. He reposed in Peace, having lived about eighty-eight years. His prophetic book, which is divided into twelve chapters, is ranked fourth among the greater Prophets.

### Apolytikion in the Second Tone

Great are the accomplishments of faith. In the fountain of flame the three Holy Youths rejoiced as though they were resting by the waters. And the



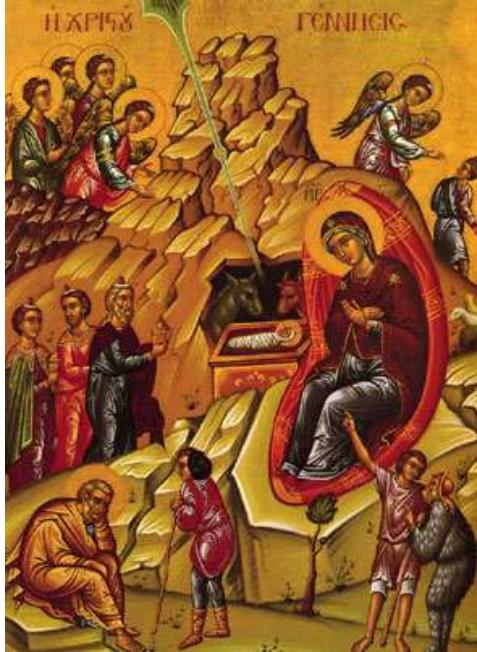
Prophet Daniel showed himself to be a shepherd to the lions, as though they were sheep. Through their prayers O Christ our God, save our souls. The holy hierarch, Saint Dionysius, who was born and reared on Zakynthos, was the son of pious and wealthy parents, Mocius and Paulina by name. In his youth he entered the ancient monastery of the Strophada Islands, which lie south of Zakynthos, and there he donned the monastic habit. Later, he was appointed Archbishop of Aegina, and adorned its throne for a considerable time. Thereafter he returned to his homeland. One incident in his life especially reveals to what virtue he attained. A man came to him in desperation, witnessing that he had committed a murder, and was being pursued by the slain man's family. He asked Saint Dionysius to give him refuge. The Saint agreed to this, upon learning that it was his own brother whom the man had slain, he said nothing, but concealing the agony of his grief, hid him. When the Saint's kinsmen arrived at the monastery, he told them that the Murderer had gone by such and such a way. When they had departed, he admonished the man concerning the gravity of his sin, instructed him in repentance, and sent him off in peace having forgiven him his brother's murder. According to local tradition, this man later returned and became a monk at this same monastery. Saint Dionysius reposed in peace in 1621, leaving behind his sacred and incorrupt relics as a treasure for his fellow citizens.

#### **Apolytikion in the First Tone**

The faithful son of Zakynthos, Aegina's wise prelate, the protector of the august Monastery of Strophada, O wise Dionysius, with one voice, all we the faithful honour thee and cry: By thy prayers, save them that keep thy memorial and cry unto thee sincerely: Glory to Christ Who hath glorified thee. Glory to Him who hath made thee wondrous. Glory to Him Who made thee our unsleeping intercessor.

### **December 25 —Nativity of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ**

The incomprehensible and inexplicable Nativity of Christ came to pass when Herod the Great was reigning in Judea; the latter was an Ascalonite on his father's side and an Idumean on his mother's. He was in every way foreign to the royal line of David; rather, he had received his authority from the Roman emperors, and had ruled tyrannically over the Jewish people for some thirty-three years. The tribe of Judah, which had reigned of old, was deprived of its rights and stripped of all rule and authority. Such was the condition of the Jews when the awaited Messiah was born, and truly thus was fulfilled the prophecy which the Patriarch Jacob had spoken 1,807 years before: "A ruler shall not fail from Judah, nor a prince from his loins, until there come the things stored up for him; and he is the expectation of the nations" (Gen.49:10).



Thus, our Saviour was born in Bethlehem, a city of Judea, whither Joseph had come from Nazareth of Galilee, taking Mary his betrothed, who was great with child, that, according to the decree issued in those days by the Emperor Augustus, they might be registered in the census of those subject to Rome. Therefore, when the time came for the Virgin to give birth, and since because of the great multitude there was no place in the inn, the Virgin's circumstance constrained them to enter a cave which was near Bethlehem. Having as shelter a stable of irrational beasts, she gave birth there, and swaddled the Infant and laid Him in the manger (Luke 2:1-7). From this, the tradition has come down to us that when Christ was born He lay between two animals, an ox and an ass, that the words of the Prophets might be fulfilled: "Between two living creatures shalt Thou be known" (Abraham 3:2), and "The ox knoweth his owner and the ass his master's crib" (Isaiah 1:3).

But while the earth gave the new-born Saviour such a humble reception, Heaven on high celebrated majestically His world-saving coming. A wondrous star, shining with uncommon brightness and following a strange course, led Magi from the East to Bethlehem to worship the new-born King. Certain shepherds who were in the area of Bethlehem, who kept watch while tending their sheep, were suddenly surrounded by an extraordinary light, and they saw before them an Angel who proclaimed to them the good tidings of the Lord's joyous Nativity. And straightway, together with this Angel, they beheld and heard a whole host of the Heavenly Powers praising God and saying: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men" (Luke 2:8-14).

#### **Apolytikion in the Fourth Tone**

Thy Nativity, O Christ our God, hath shined the light of knowledge upon the world; for thereby they that worshipped the stars were instructed by a star to worship Thee, the Sun of Righteousness, and to know Thee, the Dayspring from on high. O Lord, glory be to Thee.

#### **Kontakion in the Third Tone**

Today, the Virgin bears Him who is transcendent, and the earth presents the cave to Him who is beyond reach. Angels, along with shepherds glorify Him. The Magi make their way to Him by a star. For a new child has been born for us, the God before all ages.



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# St. Basil Greek Orthodox Church - December 2020

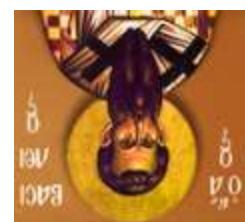
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>1</b> 8:15 am Orthros and Divine Liturgy 11:00 am St. Basil 5-7th Grade Sunday School	<b>2</b> 9:30 am Divine Liturgy for the 40 Days of the Nativity Fast (St. Andrew) 10:00 am Bible Study	<b>3</b> 9:30 am Divine Liturgy for the 40 Days of the Nativity Fast (St. Andrew)	<b>4</b> 6:30 am Divine Liturgy for St. Porphyrios 9:30 am Divine Liturgy for the 40 Days of the Nativity Fast (St. Andrew)	<b>5</b> 7:00 pm Pastoral Day for Fr. Dimitri Divine Liturgy for St. Barbara and St. John of Damascus		
<b>6</b> 8:15 am Orthros and Divine Liturgy 11:00 am St. Basil 5-7th Grade Sunday School	<b>7</b> 9:30 am Divine Liturgy for the 40 Days of the Nativity Fast (St. George) 7:00 pm Parish Council Meeting	<b>8</b> 9:30 am Divine Liturgy for the 40 Days of the Nativity Fast (St. George) 10:00 am Bible Study	<b>9</b> 9:30 am Divine Liturgy for the Conception of the Theotokos 9:30 am Divine Liturgy for the 40 Days of the Nativity Fast (St. George)	<b>10</b> 6:30 am Divine Liturgy for the 40 Days of the Nativity Fast (St. George)	<b>11</b> 9:30 am Pastoral Day for Fr. Dimitri Divine Liturgy for St. Barbara and John of Damascus	<b>12</b> 8:00 am Orthros and Divine Liturgy for St. Spyridon at Palos Heights
<b>13</b> 8:15 am Orthros and Divine Liturgy 11:00 am St. Basil 5-7th Grade Sunday School	<b>14</b> 9:30 am Divine Liturgy for the 40 Days of the Nativity Fast (St. Basil)	<b>15</b> 9:30 am Divine Liturgy for the 40 Days of the Nativity Fast (St. Basil)	<b>16</b> 9:30 am Divine Liturgy for the 40 Days of the Nativity Fast (St. Basil) 10:00 am Bible Study	<b>17</b> 9:30 am Divine Liturgy for the 40 Days of the Nativity Fast (St. Basil)	<b>18</b> 7:00 pm Pastoral Day for Fr. Dimitri Divine Liturgy for the 40 Days of the Nativity Fast (St. Basil)	<b>19</b> 8:30 am Orthros and Divine Liturgy
<b>20</b> 8:15 am Divine Liturgy for St. Ignatios the Godbearer 11:00 am St. Basil 5-7th Grade Sunday School	<b>21</b> 9:30 am Divine Liturgy for the 40 Days of the Nativity Fast (St. Demetrios)	<b>22</b> 9:30 am Divine Liturgy for the 40 Days of the Nativity Fast (St. Demetrios)	<b>23</b> 9:30 am Divine Liturgy for the 40 Days of the Nativity Fast (St. Demetrios) 10:00 am Bible Study	<b>24</b> 8:30 am Christmas Eve Royal Hours of Christmas	<b>25</b> 4:00 pm Pastoral Day for Fr. Dimitri Christmas Day Vesperal Liturgy of Christmas Eve	<b>26</b> 8:30 am Orthros and Divine Liturgy
<b>27</b> 8:30 am Orthros and Divine Liturgy for St. Stephen, Archdeacon and Martyr	<b>28</b> 9:30 am Girls Ministry to Bake Vasilopita 10:00 am Bible Study	<b>29</b> 5:30 pm Paraklesis 6:30 pm Online A.R.E. Class	<b>30</b> 5:30 pm Paraklesis 6:30 pm Online A.R.E. Class	<b>31</b> 7:00 pm New Year's Eve Hierachal Great Vespers of the Circumcision and St. Basil the Great		<b>Page 23</b>

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